

April 10, 2013

The National Security Working Group (NSWG) provides wide-spectrum coverage of issues like the Iranian threat, missile defense, sequestration, New START, events in Syria and more. We look forward to providing this newsletter to RSC members and welcome your input throughout the 113th Congress.

The Belligerence from North Korea Continues (Rep. Trent Franks, Chairman)

While we've been away for two weeks, we have heard the news about North Korea's escalating rhetoric and aggressive actions. Over the last few weeks and months their bellicosity has reached a new, disturbing level - even by the North's own historically-belligerent standards.

To put this claim in perspective, let me offer a quick recap of the threats which have emerged from the Peninsula in the last month. The dictatorship has:

- Threatened the United States with nuclear Armageddon, promising to rain missiles on mainland America and military bases in Hawaii and Guam;
- Declared a "state of war" with South Korea;
- Announced a restart of the plutonium-producing reactor at the Yongbyon nuclear site, while enriching uranium to build more nuclear weapons;
- Barred South Korean managers from entering the Kaesong industrial complex, almost the only instance of North-South co-operation.
- Deployed mid-range missile launchers to its east coast and reportedly warned foreign embassies Friday it cannot guarantee the safety of diplomats after April 10.



And *all* these decisions came immediately after the regime set off its *third* nuclear test in February. It would be irresponsible and unwise not to recognize the potential danger posed by the irrational words and actions of the country's young dictator, Kim Jong Un. Very soon, this administration will have to make the call on what action is taken on the Korean peninsula. But at the very *least*, we can take steps to bolster homeland defenses so we are fully prepared to defeat these potentially deadly threats.

Our nation's vital missile defenses have never been more in the spotlight than they are today, with THAAD batteries being deployed to Guam and Aegis-class Cruiser's being sent to South Korea. Colleagues, please keep this perspective in mind, especially with today's release of the President's Budget. We must proactively identify our best defenses against erratic and dangerous regimes, and properly support the programs which will deter these bad actors.

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Importance of the Long Range Strike Mission Demonstrated in Korea (Rep. John Flemming)

Last month, U.S. Pacific Air Forces conducted its most recent training flight of B-52 bombers over the Korean Peninsula. These aircraft are able to carry nuclear warheads and air-to-ground missiles with a range of about 1,864 miles. Flown from Anderson Air Force Base in Guam as part of the Air Force's continuous bomber presence mission, these long range strike bombers overcome the many challenges affecting missions that are dependent on forward-based tactical assets such as access to regional bases, over-flight rights, and sustaining forces deployed to a combat theater. While these flights are part of a routine show of force in the Korean Peninsula, the strategic importance of the long range strike capability could not be clearer given North Korea's recent aggressive actions and rhetoric.



The ability to strike any target, at any time, serves as a vital deterrent to potential aggressors, creates invaluable wartime strategic effects, and reassures our allies.

It is important to note that the President's new Defense Secretary, Chuck Hagel, has been a staunch advocate of scaling back important deterrent capabilities, including proposals within the Global Zero U.S. Nuclear Policy Commission report that would convert all B-52 bombers to carry only conventional munitions. Additionally, with half of the long range strike fleet pre-dating the Cuban Missile Crisis, action must be taken to ensure the long-term viability of this capability. While the Administration has abandoned the commitment it made to modernize our nuclear deterrent as part of the latest round of nuclear arms negotiations, the New Start Treaty, and has been reluctant to modernize our nation's long range strike fleet, the global threat environment continues to confirm the need to preserve and bolster these capabilities.

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North Korea's Increasing Aggression and U.S. Nuclear Deterrent (Rep. Cotton)

In light of North Korea's recent bellicosity, many in South Korea may be questioning the U.S. nuclear deterrent under an Administration whose stated intent is to reduce our nuclear arsenal in hopes that rogue regimes will follow suit. International tragedies are built on such hopes.

In April 2009, President Obama declared that reducing U.S. nuclear stockpiles "will then give us a greater moral authority to say to Iran, don't develop a nuclear weapon; to say to North Korea, don't proliferate nuclear weapons." As a recent Wall Street Journal editorial pointed out, the Obama administration's arms control agenda has had little effect in asserting any "authority," moral or otherwise: "The world can see the U.S. has acquiesced in North Korea's weapons program and lacks the will to stop Iran. It can see the U.S. is shrinking its own nuclear capacity through arms control, even as rogue threats grow. And it can see the U.S. is ambivalent about its allies getting nuclear weapons even as it does little to shore up the U.S. umbrella or allied defenses."

In recent months, North Korea has conducted a nuclear test in violation of international restrictions, re-positioned mobile ballistic missile systems, nullified the longstanding Korean War armistice, closed the Kaesong joint industrial complex, and threatened to turn Seoul into a "sea of fire." Such irrationality demands a forceful declaration that the U.S. stands with South Korea as defense of our democratic ally and their market economy is a stabilizing influence on the region. Some South Korean public officials have even encouraged the U.S. to consider reintroducing tactical nuclear weapons to the country.

The uncertainty caused by North Korea's actions risks a miscalculation sparking a wider conflict. Only an unequivocal demonstration of U.S. strength and commitment to our allies will force Pyongyang to reconsider its military adventurism.

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